

Submitted June 22, 2016
Approved as of
Date June 22, 2016

**MINUTES OF THE ROCKVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING NO. 07-2016
Wednesday, April 13, 2016**

The City of Rockville Planning Commission convened in regular session in the
Mayor and Council Chambers at 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday, April 13, 2016

PRESENT

Charles Littlefield, Chair
Don Hadley Jack Leiderman
David Hill Gail Sherman
John Tyner, II

Present: Andrew Gunning, Deputy Director
Eliot Schaefer, Assistant City Attorney
Jim Wasilak, Chief of Zoning
Brian Wilson, Principal Planner
Bobby Ray, Planning Supervisor
Greg Lyons, Senior Transportation Engineer
David Levy, Chief of Long Range Planning
Manisha Tewari, Principal Planner

Once the meeting was convened, Chairman Littlefield indicated that the order of the agenda would be amended so that the Comprehensive Master Plan presentation regarding the Community Facilities trends report would be second on the agenda, following the Tower Oaks project plan amendment. There were no objections from the Commission to the agenda adjustment.

I. Recommendation

Project Plan Application PJT2016-00006 EYA Tower Oaks – A proposal to amend the existing Planned Development approval to allow for residential use rather than office on approximately 40.74 acres of land located on the east side of Preserve Parkway. The property is zoned PD-TO (Planned Development – Tower Oaks).

Brian Wilson, Principal Planner, presented the staff report and answered questions from the Commission, including the following: the initial planned development approved for the property; recreational space, open space and a possible trail through the site and whether it would be ADA accessible; existing tree stands and forestry requirements; moderately priced dwelling units being proposed; design standards; transit and the possibility of providing a shuttle; traffic impacts; schools serving the area; convenience/retail space that may be possible within the site; parking availability, including for guests; walkability of the site plan proposed; and whether the project represented “smart growth.”

Aakash Thukkar, with EYA, presented the project and answered questions from the Commission, with assistance from attorney Scott Wallace and the landscape architect for the project. They discussed numerous topics, including: residential mix of the proposal; the reason for placing the moderately priced dwelling units in the townhouse component; walkability and density of the proposed development; demographics of likely residents; parking on public streets; traffic generation and impact on Wootton Parkway; the need for a transit circulator; natural habitat, trees and vegetation throughout the site; stormwater management and the stream valley; open space and recreational opportunities with the proposal, including a possible trail; convenience retail; transition of uses on the proposed site layout; and office space demand.

Public comment was provided by the following:

John Kyle, an owner of office space in the area, spoke in favor of the proposed amendment, believing the project would provide a better balance of uses in the area and with less traffic than additional office use.

Bill Komminers spoke on behalf of the Tower Companies, expressing support for the project amendment, believing it is time for residential use within the development.

Sean Sullivan, representing the current owner Boston Properties, spoke in favor of the proposed amendment given the high office vacancy rates and low demand.

Eric Weinberg, with Federal Capital Partners and owner of 1 Preserve Parkway, spoke in favor of the proposed amendment.

Charles Mayer, speaking on behalf of Ralph Bennett, expressed support for the proposed amendment.

Following deliberation by the Commission, Commissioner Tyner moved, seconded by Commissioner Hadley, to include two additional conditions regarding a requirement to implement a circulator bus and to require retail convenience space within the site at the project's inception. The motion passed, 6-0 (Commissioner Goodman was absent).

Commissioner Hadley moved, seconded by Commissioner Tyner, that the Commission recommend to the Mayor and Council approval of the amended resolution for the planned development, subject to the findings and conditions, including the two new conditions recommended by the Commission, and further recommend that the density of the residential use in Tower Oaks strongly leads the Commission to recommend that there not be significant other residential development within the Tower Oaks plan. The motion passed, 4-2 (Commissioners Hill and Littlefield voted no, and Commissioner Goodman was absent).

II. Comprehensive Master Plan Update (*Rockville 2040*) Presentation – Community Facilities trends report background presentation.

Manisha Tewari gave a brief overview of the issues being addressed in the upcoming Community Facilities trends report. She indicated the final report will be available soon, with a more detailed

presentation to the Commission during an upcoming meeting.

III. Commission Items

- A. Staff Liaison Report** – Andrew Gunning provided an update regarding the Commission’s next meeting.
- B. Old Business** – none
- C. New Business** – none
- D. Minutes** - none
- E. FYI Correspondence** – none

IV. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, the meeting adjourned at 12:04 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrew Gunning, Commission Liaison